

Commission reminder to get risk management strategies in place

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian is reminding businesses and organisations which employ blue card holders they need a risk management strategy to protect children in their care from harm.

Changes to the Commission's Act last year require these organisations to have a written risk management strategy in place which is updated each year.

The strategy should outline an organisations' policies and procedures, to ensure they provide friendly environments for children and young people.

Commissioner, Elizabeth Fraser, said the Commission offers free risk management training in all regions of the state to help people meet their obligation.

"The Commission has held over 100 workshops for around 2,000 people over the past six months to help organisations and small businesses which fall under the Commission's Act to meet their duty of care to children," she said.

"We've had a great response so far, and want to make sure that everyone who needs to know about the new requirement is aware.

"The requirement has actually been in place since 17 January last year, and the Commission is keen to take a collaborative approach to help businesses and employers comply with the legislation."

The Commission's workshops explain how to go about getting the policies and procedures organisations in place needed to protect children from the risk of harm.

Harm is anything detrimental to a child's wellbeing, either physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation.

Risk management allows organisations to identify and assess possible sources of harm, and take steps to decrease or prevent it from occurring. It must include evidence of procedures, processes and documents which show an organisation's commitment to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The key elements an organisation needs to consider in creating a risk management strategy include:

- a child protection policy, which outlines:
 - a Code of Conduct
 - recruitment, training and management procedures for staff
 - reporting guidelines and directions for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, and
 - consequences to staff for non-compliance with the policy

- communication and support strategies, such as:
 - information sheets for staff, volunteers and parents about policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct, and
 - training materials and communication strategies which help staff, volunteers and parents identify risks of harm

- documentation of risk management processes including:
 - registers of staff
 - strategies and plans for high-risk and special events
 - complaints registers, and
 - forms to ensure consistent handling of incidents, disclosures of harm, permissions and approvals for related activities.

Although the Commission provides free training, it cannot approve or ratify risk management strategies. Each organisation is required to determine whether their policies and practices are adequate to protect children in their care from harm and to promote their wellbeing.

If a child is harmed in some way, the organisation caring for them may be required to prove staff took 'reasonable steps' to prevent 'foreseeable harm'.

Those interested in finding out more about the training can go to [www.ccyipcq.qld.gov.au/About us/Training](http://www.ccyipcq.qld.gov.au/About%20us/Training)

For more information, call the Commission on 1800 688 275.